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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Minnesota Geographic Names; Their Origin and Historic Significance (Minnesota Historical Collections, vol. 17). By WARREN UPHAM. (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1920. viii, 735 p.)

The subject of the origin and significance of names, either personal and family names or names of places, is one of unending and alluring interest. Every name carries a volume of history. Place names often have come from aboriginal sources. Sometimes they have passed down through time in almost perfect original form, but many times they can scarcely be recognized, so mutilated have they been by alien tongues, sometimes even by a succession of tongues alien to each other and to the original; as, for instance, a place name which came originally from one or another of the Indian languages, then was either corrupted in pronunciation or translated, and finally was corrupted by the English from the French.

But every name carries its story of wonder, of beauty, of romance, or of devotion and sacrifice and heroism; or, on the other hand, a name may tell of sordidness, meanness, grasping avarice, or vulgar vacuity of mind in those who first affixed it. Place names may even sometimes originate in the most frivolous aggregation of mutilated fractions of real words. The name of the Cayuna Iron Range, for example, was made by sticking together fractions of the names of a certain man and his dog; others have been made by fragmenting two meaningful words and then putting two unrelated fragments together to form a meaningless vocable like Itasca, on a par with such devices as the well-known trade names "kodak," "uneeda," and "takoma."

Whoever undertakes and faithfully carries out the task of compiling the place names of a state, with their derivation and significance, performs a praiseworthy accomplishment and does a distinct public service. Such a work has been produced for the state of Minnesota by Dr. Warren Upham in his *Minnesota Geographic Names*. This is a careful, painstaking, and conscientious

study of the origin and, so far as possible, an exposition of the meaning of the names of all the natural features, as lakes, streams, hills, and valleys, and of the political divisions, as counties, towns, and cities of the state. This is a most noteworthy work, the result of a vast amount of diligent, persistent, and painstaking labor. It is one more monument to the indefatigable labors of Dr. Upham. The Minnesota Historical Society is to be congratulated upon the issuance of this work. It is to be wished that every state might have wrought out for it as good and full an account of its place names as this which has been written for Minnesota.

MELVIN RANDOLPH GILMORE

Vagabond och redaktör: lefnadsöden och tidsbilder. By ERNST SKARSTEDT. (Seattle, Washington Printing Company, 1914. 410 p. Illustrations.)

Svensk-amerikanska folket i helg och söcken: strödda blad ur svensk-amerikanernas historia, deras öden och bedrifter, nederlag och segrar, livsintressen och förströelser, jämte biografiska uppgifter om ett antal märkesmän. By ERNST SKARSTEDT. (Stockholm, Björck and Börjesson, 1917. 450 p. Illustrations.)

The reader of Ernst Skarstedt's *Vagabond och redaktör* would hardly expect to find in the same author's *Svensk-amerikanska folket i helg och söcken* the most comprehensive and in many respects the best balanced and most sympathetic account of the Swedish-Americans yet written. Journalist, musician, carpenter, farmer, book agent, tramp, truckman, photographer, essayist, skeptic, humorist, and philistine, Mr. Skarstedt can scarcely be said to embody the essential qualifications of an historian; but his delightful style, insatiable appetite for reading, wide acquaintance, extensive traveling, and keen understanding of human nature more than make up for his shortcomings. The translator who can do justice to the sparkling pages of these two books, which contribute so much to our knowledge of the emigration, settlement, and progress of the Swedish people in America, will be welcomed.